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LETTER DATED 5 NOVEMBER 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BURUNDI TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to inform you that parliamentary days were organized in Bujumbura (Kigobe) from 14 to 17 October 1997 at the seat of the National Assembly. The theme of these days was "Contribution of the National Assembly to the process of peace and national reconciliation and to respect for human rights in Burundi".

I take this opportunity to transmit to you the text of the conclusions and recommendations that emerged from these parliamentary days.

I should be grateful if you would have this text circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Gamaliel NDARUZDANIYE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Conclusions and recommendations adopted at the parliamentary days held in Kigobe from 14 to 17 October 1997 on the theme: contribution of the National Assembly to the process of peace and national reconciliation and to respect for human rights in Burundi

The participants in the parliamentary days,

Convinced that peace and security for all are an essential condition for the development of countries in general and of Burundi in particular, because of the unprecedented crisis that it has experienced since the fateful date of 21 October 1993,

Convinced that the National Assembly, as a legitimate national institution, must assume the responsibility of participating in the creation and maintenance of a political and diplomatic environment favourable to the process of peace, national reconciliation, democratization and national reconstruction,

Recognizing that the representatives of the people must defend the interests of the people who elected them, especially during this very trying time,

Considering that war, violence, suspicion and the demonization of others impede any progress towards reconciliation and the solution of the problems facing the people of Burundi,

Believing that all the people of Burundi need to regain peace and dignity and to enjoy their fundamental rights,

Considering that there is a need for an open and sincere dialogue among the people of Burundi under international mediation accepted by all the parties involved in the Burundi conflict,

Referring to our cherished culture, which requires that conflicts be settled peacefully by bashingantahe (leaders) accepted by society,

Following many exchanges of experience and fruitful discussions that were both diversified and complementary, the participants in the parliamentary days recommend that:

A. The Government:

1. Establish a clear programme aimed at restoring genuine peace and security for all;

2. Initiate and promote in Burundi society a philosophy which accords morality its rightful place, so as to constantly reinforce confidence among the people of Burundi and the equality of all before the law;

3. Promote veneration of the truth, so as to restore confidence and a minimum state of coexistence among the people of Burundi, in particular through the media. For that reason there should be a joint review of history, so as to reveal the roots of the Burundi malaise;

4. Become deeply involved in the process of restoring the law;

5. Promote a political and moral framework and mechanisms that will reassure all the people of Burundi before negotiations begin;

6. Pursue without respite the policy of national reconciliation, repatriation, reinsertion, reinstallation and return of refugees, displaced persons, regrouped persons and dispersed persons;

7. Formulate a programme of national reconstruction and mobilize all the people of Burundi to play a part in its implementation;

8. Contact friendly countries and agencies in order to request material and financial assistance to complement its national reconstruction efforts;

9. Lastly, the defence and security forces should display exemplary behaviour in the execution of their mission, especially at this time, when peace negotiations are being prepared and in the future.

B. To the National Assembly:

The participants in the parliamentary days recommend that the Assembly:

1. Continue to be the architect of peace, democracy, respect for the law and the rule of law;

2. The Burundi parliamentarians observe that the embargo inflicts suffering on innocent people and request that it be lifted, while calling on the Government to honour the undertaking to participate in negotiations as recommended by the Heads of State of the region;

3. Initiate actions that contribute to the peace programme through its standing committees, each in its own sphere of competence, and to propose such actions to the various Burundi partners;

4. Listen to the people and to all the Burundi partners and propose solutions to their grievances;

5. Establish one or more specialized commissions to study the fundamental issues facing the nation, especially those relating to justice, education, good governance, the democratic ethos and so on;

6. Organize seminars and conferences to reinvigorate the action of the Burundi parliamentarians and invite eminent people having great experience in peaceful conflict resolution;

7. Follow closely the various stages of the negotiations so as to ensure that the conclusions reached by the various parties are consonant with the higher interests of the Burundi people as a whole.

C. To the courts:

The participants in the parliamentary days recommend that:

1. Judicial proceedings should be based on the law;

2. The independence of the judiciary should be taken into consideration and should prevail over other powers with a view to the just and rigorous application of the law;

3. They should insist on being given the means and tools they need to perform their important and very sensitive task efficiently.

D. To all the people of Burundi:

The participants in the parliamentary days recommend that they should:

1. Cease killing one another, whatever the pretext;

2. Demonstrate greater patriotism, restraint and moderation;

3. Make an effort to achieve an identical reading of our history and make a break with the sombre past in order to build a better future together;

4. Be constantly on their guard to ensure that their statements are impartial and objective, in order to avoid stereotyping and demonization, and that any criticisms they put forward are constructive;

5. Engage in the reconstruction of their country by relying primarily on their own resources through their renowned solidarity, rather than expecting everything to be done by the State and by benefactors.

E. To the international community:

The participants in the parliamentary days recommend that it:

1. Call on the belligerents to renounce war and persuade them that dialogue is the best way to resolve the conflict in Burundi;

2. Continue and intensify its humanitarian activities on behalf of the victims of disaster;

3. Resume both bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Burundi as the peace process advances.

In conclusion,

The participants in the parliamentary days express their deepest gratitude to the Association of West European Parliamentarians for Southern Africa, which has supported this constructive initiative morally, politically and materially and remains available to continue encouraging the peace process in Burundi and encourage a resumption of cooperation for development with friendly countries and bodies.

The participants thank all the national and international organizations that from far or near supported the holding of the parliamentary days.

The participants in the parliamentary days also thank the Mozambican and South African parliamentarians who were so kind as to participate actively in the debates and who shared with the Burundi community their experience of negotiating peace in their own countries.

The Burundi parliamentarians likewise thank the Rwandan Members of Parliament who kindly associated themselves with the activities of the parliamentary days.

The representatives of the Burundi people express their sincere thanks to the Government of Burundi, which was good enough to associate itself with this initiative through the participation of its members in the parliamentary debate and through its moral, material and financial support.

Lastly, the representatives of the people and the other participants consider that the parliamentary days have created a new climate of dialogue and confidence between the executive and legislative branches which will promote the positive evolution of the process of peace and national reconciliation in Burundi.

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